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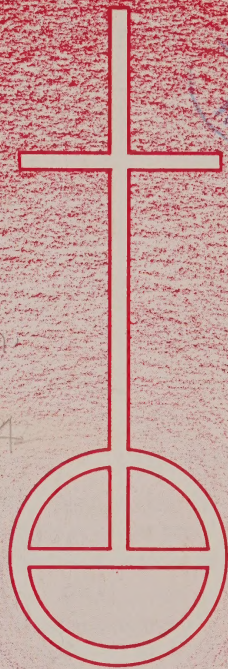
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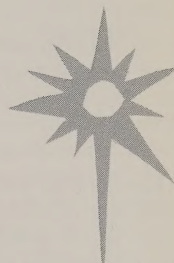
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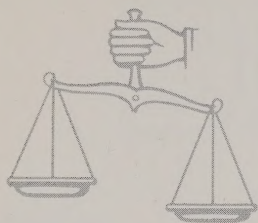


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the dimension

of Pastoral Psychology *the limits of honesty*



R. Richard Kimbrough

Honesty in personal encounter: in the revealing of memories, failures and problems, is in danger of being absolutized into a legalistic principle. After a summer of observing pastoral counseling, I have come to the conclusion that we should take a second look at the limits of honesty, candor and frankness in our personal relationships.

First of all, let it be said that there is a clear mandate for honesty and openness in our personal encounters. This mandate stems from our need for fellowship and truth. Honesty is the basis of all interpersonal virtues and the *sine qua non* of love and acceptance. The achievement of honesty marks the birth of relationship. The waning of honesty spells the death of personal encounter. Without honesty love evaporates into sentimentality and acceptance stagnates in "professional" technique.

Honesty makes possible the authentic "I-Thou" encounter. Philanthropy is possible without relationship, but love is not. Love requires interpersonal communication but this exchange remains trivial until honesty is achieved. So it is that two people can be in conversation but not in relationship. Each regards the other as an object rather than a person, and their interaction remains on Buber's "I-It" level. Thus, honesty is a necessary part of any authentic person-to-person encounter.

Honesty, in the sense of disclosure, is

also an avenue to truth about ourselves. We all need to bring our feelings and thoughts into the light of the opinion of trustworthy men. Without openness, we hazard being-fooled by the deception of our passions and the misrepresentations of our personal defenses. The person who is not open risks hypocrisy. He does not know himself because he has not exposed his ideas and emotions in authentic relationship. As Christians we should be aware that it was for the hypocrit and not the lawbreaker that Christ reserved his harshest words.

Because the man who is not open is both likely to be wrong about himself and about things outside himself, the word "honesty" can have two meanings. It can mean both "Truthfulness" and "Openness." This article is limited to the latter use.

WHAT PRICE HONESTY?

As we have seen, the mandate for honesty is compelling. We are tempted to seek it at all costs. We feel that to do anything else would dehumanize our relationships and encourage self-deception. Honesty at all costs!

But are there limits to honesty? Are there points where the price of disclosure is too great? If there are, we need to know. For, if we set the price too low, we risk selling the birthright of our integrity for the pottage of expediency. But if we set the cost too high, we hazard paying by the destruction of a person or of a relationship. We must know the cost of honesty. Just as we can choose with the greatest freedom when we are aware of the limits of our choices, so we can be most honest when we are aware

of the limits of honesty.

The weakness and sinfulness of men determine the limits of honesty. Openness and truth are the hope of every sensitive Christian. But in the concrete situations of everyday life, temporary restraint of honesty is often needed in the service of long-range truth. Honesty must take the form of the Gospel which Paul describes as "foolish and weak." Like the Good News, personal disclosure should be treated gently lest it crush a man by its power. This is not to question the virtue of honesty. It is to state that because of the sinfulness of men there are limitations.

Civilization requires restraint. We desire honesty, but not in all things. If there were no withholding of passion we would live in chaos. We want people to be "dishonest" when it comes to expressing hostile and negative feelings. Society also requires restraint. Its masks, roles, and conventions conceal. For instance, if a very sick man were asked, "How do you do?" he would probably reply, "Fine, thank you." We are so used to dishonesty that we disregard it. Even the Church has its roles and its conventions. What pastor, for instance, would dare voice his inner religious doubts in public? Every army has its uniform and the Church Militant is no exception.

Fortunately, the masks we use to relate to each other are a part of our real selves. The way we hide ourselves is as revealing as what we are trying to conceal, and is as much a part of us as what we openly display.

Individual identity also requires restraint. By thinking of himself as separate from the world, the child acquires his sense of personal existence. He gains something which is his alone: his thoughts. These "secrets" are important because they set the child apart. The peek-a-boo game, hide and seek, the secret "hide-out," and the password are all part of the child's search for identity through secrecy. In like manner the adolescent struggling with his new-found identity becomes self-conscious and builds the barrier of shyness.

Yet if the individual is formed by secrets, it is by the revealing of secrets that his relationships grow. So it is that the child wants to reveal his secret and the adolescent looks to the day when he can share what he has hidden from the many with the one he has chosen. We respect the secrets of others because we want them to respect ours. We reveal our secrets to others because we want their love. But even here there are limits.

Honesty is bought at too great a price when it becomes a principle which is more important than the people or the relationships it seeks to serve. Of course, if men were perfect, openness could never hurt people or their relationships. But this is not the case. There exist several faults which can be exposed by personal disclosure. Thus honesty can injure or end a relationship, be a vehicle for self-punishment, or an expression of irresponsible dependency. In every case the problem lies not with the desire for honesty itself, but with its use.

THE LIMITS OF HONESTY

Honesty is ultimately desirable, but human imperfection sets limits. For example, many ministers, after what seemed like an unusually open counseling session, are surprised that the counselee never returns. Why? Perhaps the counselee could not bear the pastor's knowledge of his problems. Thus, we derive this axiom of counseling: the counselor must never force, and must not permit a person to reveal more about himself than the person can bear to have the counselor know. If the person passes this limit, the relationship will be broken. The minister's ultimate aim of bringing the counselee to honesty will be frustrated by the serious inability to endure temporary "dishonesty."

On the other hand, it may be the minister who is not able to bear the burden of honesty. Though this is often the case, ministers seldom realize it. If the minister is unable to accept the counselee and becomes judgmental because of what the

counselee has revealed to him, the "I-Thou" relationship has been broken. The "I-Thou" encounter of true dialogue has been broken when the "I" cannot bear the "Thou's" knowledge of him or when the "Thou" cannot bear what the "I" has revealed about himself.

Second, honesty must not go beyond the mutual trust of the relationship. Either party can be hurt when what he has revealed in confidence is betrayed. The minister who uses personal material from counseling in his sermons, no matter how well he disguises it, had well remember that in so doing he may undermine the confidence of those he seeks to help.

HONESTY: CHEAP AND MORBID

Honesty can go beyond trust. In fact it is often made a principle or technique to be practiced. Cheap honesty does not aim at relationship but at the fulfillment of a law. It is often part of an unrealistic attempt to be perfect. Yet, this very concern is so self-centered that it often detracts from relationship and causes disclosure to lose its purpose. Any desire for frankness which does not have a concern for people and relationships at its foundation can only lead to cheap honesty.

Like the cheap variety, morbid honesty goes beyond the mutual trust of the relationship. This type of disclosure is used for self-punishment. Feeling guilty for some real or imagined reason, a person may subject himself to the pain of inappropriate frankness in an attempt to atone. Sometimes this pattern is a carry-over from childhood discipline. When the child does wrong, he fears punishment, thus creating anxiety which is not relieved until punishment is received. He comes to seek punishment as a means of reducing anxiety. But regardless of the source of morbid honesty, it is always characterized by inappropriateness. It is most desirable to the punishment-seeker when it farthest exceeds the trust of the relationship because then it is the most painful.

Another variety of morbid honesty is an extension of irresponsible dependency. Here the counselee tries to get the minister to solve his problems for him and refuses to work on them himself. In family relationships this kind of person might "dump" the burden of his personal failure upon his spouse. In the name of openness he asks another to bear the entire responsibility for the relationship. Perhaps he discloses something which hurts him deeply; for example, he tells his wife that he has been unfaithful to her. He personally is relieved at having the truth in the open, but the wife is hurt. He has "dumped" rather than "shared." Honesty has been brought into the service of dishonesty. What has been revealed, no matter how sordid, remains superficial. Self-punishing and dependent honesty are self-defeating. They do not lead to relationship.

The final limit of honesty is at the point at which it would hurt or ruin a person, either a member or the dialogue or a third party. The Jesus who said, "I am the Truth," also said, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." For the sake of his disciples, Christ held back. When a person cannot face the truth about himself he will be hurt by the pressure to be "honest." There is a thin line to be walked, for although all growth involves pain, the minister must be sensitive enough to know when the pain will be too great for the counselee to bear. The counselor must increase the counselee's insight without forcing him to retreat. If honesty forces a retreat from the truth, it has served dishonesty.

Disclosure can also injure someone who is not a member of the dialogue. The revealing of one's own difficulties, while desirable, should always be done where it will not endanger another's reputation or privacy. When confession implicates another without his knowledge, the third party may be hurt and his relationship with either the minister or the counselee ruined. If the third party learns that his secret has been revealed he may break his relationship with the one who told or

even with the minister. And even if this person remains ignorant of the revelation, the minister and the counselee will still face the difficulty of acting dishonestly with him by pretending the revelation had not been made. There is here a strong argument for a specialized pastoral counseling ministry. The parish minister is usually so involved with his people that injury to third-party relationships is a constant threat.

CHEAP DISHONESTY

These limits to honesty or disclosure can easily be misunderstood. In the first place they must not be construed as an excuse for refusing to face the truth about oneself. While in dialogue, honesty assumes the shape of disclosure. Within the individual it takes the form of confrontation. The evasion of responsibility is never desirable intra-personally. If the issue cannot be acknowledged but must be repressed, the need for professional help is indicated. Every unconscious thought need not be dredged up, but already conscious issues demanding recognition must be confronted. But what of inter-personal relationships?

THE RISK OF LOVE

How much damage to a person, or to a relationship, should be endured for the sake of honesty? There is no general answer to this question, except to say that the knowledge that there often is a price for openness can help us be more responsible in the everyday situations in which the question arises. We cannot capture honesty in a box. As it has been said, there are no speeches in relationships; no script for true encounter. Honesty is spontaneous. It is open to reply and is obliged to reply in turn. Its focus is always what is happening right now in the relationship. Where inter-

personal honesty must be planned, then the person should ask if he has first been honest with himself. If he has worked through the problem in his own mind, and is alert to the mood of the relationship, the secret material will be revealed or concealed quite naturally and with little chance of offense.

Honesty requires risk, but it is that risk of love which is necessary for relationship. In "I-Thou" encounters much is risked. Disclosure can be betrayed by the breach of confidence, offered love can be rejected, and the negative feelings which arise in honest encounter can be resented. Thus, he who would establish a relationship hazards both the other and himself. The former may betray, reject, or resent, and the latter may also betray, because honesty leads to the sharing of one's negative as well as positive feelings. Yet we must be willing to take this risk of love.

Jesus took the ultimate risk for our sakes. He dared to hang naked on the cross exposed to the ridicule of men. He took the chance of being the world's greatest fool. He was open as no man has ever dared to be. Yet, "Greater love hath no man than this . . ." Risking death itself, Christ brought God's love to man. This is the "weak" gospel. For the "world" it is foolishness, for the Christian the foundation of life. It is this risk of Christ's which reveals to us God's love. Courage is necessary for risk, risk for honesty, honesty for relationship, and relationship for love. The courage needed to take the risk of honesty comes from our trust in divine acceptance through Christ's justifying Word. We have been accepted. And the Christian's hope that honesty will lead through relationship to love comes from our experience of Christ's ultimate risk. It is in the light of this example of love that the mandate for honesty remains.

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of Philosophical Theology

on the demonstration of the existence of God

William P. Anderson

Near the beginning of the **Summa Theologica**, Thomas Aquinas raises the question whether it can be demonstrated that God exists.¹ The problem then is concerned with the possibility of a demonstration of the existence of God. In his *sed contra* Aquinas recalls that demonstration can be made in two ways: "one is through cause and is called **propter quid**; . . . the other is through the effect and is called a demonstration **quia** . . ."² There is reason to prefer one of these two methods in proving the existence of God. Demonstrations, in any case, proceed from that which is better known to that which is less well-known. Thus, for Aquinas, we have, practically speaking, no choice. Since the nature of God is less known than his effects, it is from this latter point that we must start our demonstration of the existence of God.

This factor dominates the problem and it accounts for the structure taken by each of the proofs for the existence of God. Let us just cite several elements present:

1) we may see an empirically given starting point, which is a being in actual existence; this is necessary because an existence can only be inferred from another one, i.e. from existent to existence. To put it another way, the Thomistic proofs, while metaphysical in their conclusions, are physical in their starting point.

2) The notion of cause; for since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists the cause must then pre-exist.

3) Finally another notion, which Thomas neither defines nor specifies, and yet one that will play a decisive part in all his demonstrations, namely, that in any given series of relations, particularly those of

cause and effect, the existence of the series presupposes the existence of a first term without which the series itself would not exist. This supposal is extremely important for without it the result would be an infinite series of causes which must necessarily be excluded.

These notions enabled Aquinas to answer his question, Whether God exists?, in the affirmative and the celebrated Five Ways are the result. It is recognized generally that this proof was philosophically justifiable up to the end of the 17th Century. That is: up to that time the majority of the answers to the question would have been in the affirmative also. On the other hand, as early as 1637, which saw Descartes' **Discourse** published, the philosophical status of the question had been noticeably modified. In this epoch-making work Descartes sought to extend his mathematical discoveries to the entire body of the sciences. As he writes in the Second Part of the **Discourse on Method**: "These long chains of reasoning, simple and easy as they are, of which geometricians make use in order to arrive at the most difficult demonstrations, had caused me to imagine that all those things which fall under the cognizance of man might very likely be mutually related in the same fashion; . . ."³ Descartes therefore had in mind to reduce all scientific and philosophical problems to a mathematical or quasi-mathematical form.

Furthermore when Immanuel Kant, in 1781, published the **Critique of Pure Reason**, a second revolution took place. Like the preceding revolution this was also tied up with the sciences, but now

the leading science was physics and not mathematics. It was the revealing to the world, i.e. in the physics of Issac Newton, of the possibilities of a mathematical formulation of experimentally observable facts. Consequently we have: observation, then reasoning, and finally an empirically verifiable conclusion.

Thus the question of the validity of metaphysical knowledge comes to view. However carefully one may explain the demonstrations of the existence of God by Thomas the ready objection will be that this kind of reasoning has been disqualified by Kant's refutation of the "sacred doctrines of dogmatic philosophy." It is not that the reasoning is incorrect, but rather that they are not demonstrations at all. If metaphysical knowledge is not real knowledge, then, since God is no object of sense experience, the demonstration of His existence becomes impossible. In other words, if this be true, then apparently Aquinas' argument *a posteriori*, from effect to cause, from existent to existence, ceases to be a real demonstration. While Aquinas admits that we cannot know **what God is**, we can, he maintains, certainly know from His effects **whether He is.**⁴

Some state that the philosophers before the 18th century had not really appreciated the meaning of the words "scientific knowledge," i.e. before Kant nobody realized the difference of certitude in mathematical, physical, and metaphysical demonstrations. However, it seems quite unlikely that Thomas did not realize the eminent certainty of what we call the positive sciences. He learned, as did others, from Euclid what a geometrical demonstration is, and furthermore, the successful application of geometry sufficed to make him realize the nature of a demonstration in physics. As we may see quite readily from his early questions on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, he classified the sciences according to a simple scale of certainty dependent upon their respective objects. Therefore, as he perceived it, intellectual knowledge was abstract knowledge; the more abstracted from matter the consideration of a science is, the more

certain its conclusions are, but it is also a more difficult science to grasp and to learn.

The *naturalis scientia* (i.e. physics) is the least abstract kind of science. That is: these disciplines deal with objects of sense-perception, starting from observation and search out an experimental control. Mathematics, on the other hand, is more abstract and considers intellectual relationships between concepts. Thus it enjoys the solidity of reason without losing itself in pure abstractions. It keeps a balance between the excessive complexities of the concrete and the arbitrary simplicity of the wholly abstract notions. Metaphysics, like mathematics deals with notions, but the effort of the metaphysician is to try to transcend the consideration of images, without which, strictly speaking, man cannot think. This is the reason metaphysics, which deals with the loftiest of the objects of knowledge, i.e. those which are the most immaterial, is so obscure and difficult to assimilate.

Mathematics, says Aquinas, "is easier and more certain than natural science and theology."⁵ And "since mathematics is intermediate between natural and divine science, it is more certain than either."⁶ Therefore, scientific knowledge and its distinctions was not new to Thomas. He distinguishes clearly: "let us call the other two kinds of theoretical knowledge (physics and metaphysics) opinion rather than science; theology indeed on account of its obscurity and incomprehensibility, physics, on the other hand, because of the instability and obscurity of matter. Mathematics alone will give the inquirer firm and unshaken certitude, namely, demonstrations carried out with unquestionable methods."⁷ So while Thomas was informed of the superiority of mathematical knowledge, he did not infer that man should aim at achieving mathematical knowledge of non-mathematical objects.

The metaphysician may conclude that there must be a God or a soul etc., but neither can be empirically observed. Therefore we do not prove that they actually are, and when we make such an attempt, there is just as much in favor

of the contrary conclusion. This is the crux of Kant's critique, i.e. ultimately metaphysical conclusions are not conclusive because their objects cannot be given in sense experience. Thus, if one applies to metaphysical objects of reflection the method successful in physics, it simply does not work; there are no physical demonstrations of metaphysical conclusions. To jump from empirically given facts to a non-empirical cause is a dogmatic use of reason. And since God is not given in experience, His existence cannot be demonstrated by speculative reason.

Thomas' understanding of reason is a necessary condition to the understanding of his Five Ways. This centers around the intellect. Man is endowed with an intellect whose proper function is to abstract the data of sense notions that make up the objects of our knowledge. Reason is a weakening of this intellection. Thus men are called "rational" because reason raises them above brutes; but they are also so called because they are not wholly intellectual beings as, for example, angels are. Thus Thomas writes: "human souls, which acquire the knowledge of truth discursively, are called rational; and this comes of the feebleness of their intellectual light. For if they possessed the fullness of intellectual light, like the angels, then in the first grasping of principles, they would at once comprehend all their virtualities, by perceiving whatever could be reasoned out from them."⁸

But the opposite of this is that although reason is not an intelligence, it is intellect itself in its discursive use; it is the supreme cognitive power in man. "What is highest in our knowledge is not reason, but intellect, which is the origin of reason."⁹ The point is this: while the weakness of the intellect makes it necessary for us to use it discursively, the force of our reason is that it is a mode of intellect: "the certainty of reason comes from a lack of intellect."¹⁰

The question reduces itself to this: from the fact that reason cannot prove there is a God in the Kantian philosophy, in which reason is neither an intellect nor a mode of intellectual knowledge, does it

follow that one cannot prove the existence of God in a doctrine in which reason is but the use of an intellect that is the cause of reason, in whose nature it shares and from whose light it derives its force?

While reason is at home in physics and in mathematics, it is not equal to the task in the question of metaphysical knowledge. However, it is not dispensed with, but rather reaches metaphysical conclusions only at it itself is the discursive use of an intellect whose proper act is to form and to intuit the principles. Aquinas writes: "just as we attribute a rational method of reason, so we attribute an intellectual method of divine science, because it adheres most clearly to the method of the intellect."¹¹ In sum, the principle tool of man in the acquisition of the sciences is reason; in the mastering of metaphysical truth, it is intellection.

The importance of intellect for Thomas is quite evident. Without intellect proceeding in this discursive way, there would be no demonstration, no proof at all. Without it, furthermore, Kant would be right in his observation that reason could go on indefinitely in thus accounting for a particular cause by another cause. Only at a certain moment, for Aquinas, intellect steps in and puts an end to the infinite series of regressions. Thus reason comes to an end as soon as intellect realizes that the very principle that sets the whole operation in motion is also the true answer to the problem.

Framed in this way the intellect is seen as the instrument of metaphysical knowledge and is to be noted as not a demonstration, but a vision. Consequently, all rational demonstrations either go on to infinity and fail to demonstrate or proceed from a principle and return to it, in which case they are able to conclude.

There are two or three questions which we would like to raise with respect to this scheme. First and foremost, one of the difficulties with the Thomistic scheme is the fact that Thomas seems to import this concept of intellection, which, when applied in the manner in which he desires, will by its own definition solve all problems and as such does not really seem to

be a valid solution. Further, is this being consistent on his part? i.e., is this consistent with the original handling of the problems as we find it in question 2 article 2 of the *Summa* where he writes: "Hence the existent of God, in so far as he is not self-evident, **can be demonstrated from those of his effects which are known to us.**"¹² Without this concept of intellection the arguments of cause and effect, etc. would go on to infinity, as, for example, they do in Aristotle.

Secondly, we construe this concept of intellection as really being a type of intuition, as both Bonaventura and Duns Scotus seems to do. And if this is true, we ask, "Can there be a revealed quantity in a rational argument?"

Finally, even in granting Aquinas' conclusions the knowledge which his demon-

strations provide is a limited knowledge of God which at its best only serves to enrich the life of one who already shares in the faith. It is in this respect that the demonstrations make their contribution.

Notes:

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theological*, IP. qu 2 ar 2.

² *Ibid.*

³ Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Second Part.

⁴ S.T. IP. qu 12, ar 12, res adv 1.

⁵ Aquinas, *Exposition Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate*, q VI, a.1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ S.T. IP. qu 58, ar 3.

⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 1, Ch 57, No. 8.

¹⁰ S.T. IIa II ae qu 49, ar 5.

¹¹ *Expositio*, qu vi, A. I. ad 3.

¹² S.T. IP qu 2 ar 2.

Commentary

Some comments on Mr. Anderson's paper on the Demonstration of the existence of God

Dr. Arthur G. Madden, *Professor of Philosophy*
Saint Agnes College, Baltimore, Maryland

Mr. Anderson in his paper has clearly set forth a number of important elements which form the foundation of Aquinas' efforts to demonstrate the existence of God. He then makes a just criticism of the demonstration within a framework of Kantian epistemology. I shall make some brief comments on a few of his points which may cast the Thomistic demonstrations in a somewhat different light.

In the second paragraph Mr. Anderson cites three elements in the structure of the proofs. He states that "the Thomistic proofs, while metaphysical in their conclusions, are physical in their starting point." The meaning of "physical" is taken as "empirical" and the meaning of "metaphysical" would appear to be "non-empirical." Now this use of the terms is a common one but the terms mean something else for Thomas. For him the "physical" is the individual which exists and acts. This physical reality may be material or spiritual. The "metaphysical" is real but with the reality of the ideal order, the ultimate ground of which is the Prime Existent. Ideal reality may become actuated in the physical order either as a material or as a spiritual being. The proofs are called metaphysical because they employ metaphysical or transcendental ideas which are the human ways of grasping the real in its most basic aspects. These primary aspects are given in every experience of the real. This is to say that along with the sense intuition of the individual object or event we have an intellectual intuition of a universal or transcendental meaning exemplified in the individual. This, of course, Kant would deny. Also, rather than say that the inference is from existent to existence, I would prefer to say that it is from existent to the prime existent, unless we wish to refer to God as "existence itself." To use "existence" seems to indicate that we move concrete existing realities to an abstract concept, which would leave the proof open to one of Kant's criticisms of the cosmological argument.

In the second point of the same paragraph I would suggest that the word "pre-exist" be changed to "exist." A cause, as cause, is simultaneous with the effect. Its priority is a priority of nature or a logical priority but not a priority of time.

In the third point of the paragraph I think that some qualifications must be made about an infinite series of causes being necessarily excluded

by St. Thomas. Thomas maintained that reason could not show that an eternal world was impossible nor that an infinite series of *caused* causes was impossible. He held that a series of *caused* causes stretched out to infinity still did not adequately explain the dependence. There was necessary an *uncaused* cause of the existence of the members of the series and this uncaused cause was outside the series and had a different character than the members of the series. It should be noted that near the end of the paper when Mr. Anderson speaks of an infinite regress he is speaking of a regress in logical deduction and not a regress in causality.

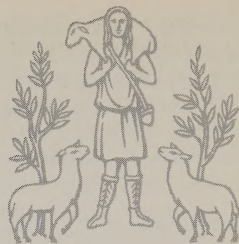
The criticisms directed by Kant against the metaphysical proofs are reasonable if one is willing to accept the Kantian epistemology in its entirety. But if one does this, then not only does metaphysical knowledge go out the window but likewise goes Kant-in-himself. And where does that leave us? There seems to be a discrepancy between Kant's intention to tell us what reality is like, at least the reality of his mind, and his statement that the reality-in-itself remains unknown and unknowable. The reality-in-itself becomes superfluous and we wind up in a closed consciousness. No wonder that for Kant the Cosmological argument always subsumes the Ontological argument.

It is true that any metaphysical demonstration has to start from an intellectual "vision" or intuition. If some universal or transcendental meaning is not given in intuition in the course of our experience, no demonstration can get started. Unless we have an intuition of the meaning of finite being and the intuition of being as the basic value found in every possible object of experience and the insight into the primary principles such as causality, we cannot begin a demonstration of the existence of God. These intuitions are not "revealed quantities" any more than any other natural knowledge is a revelation. With these metaphysical elements as starting points it is possible by intellectual analysis to see that the existence of finite beings which have only a limited participation in being and do not have the adequate explanation for their existence in themselves require the existence of a non-finite, absolute being as their adequate explanation. The outcome of this analysis is an explanation of the existence of finite beings. It will not be an explanation of God.

the dimension of Pastoral Care

the Minister and His Theology

John A. Huffman, Jr.



It has appeared to me that there is a disparity between theology and pastoral work. Whereas there should be a direct connection between these two, it appears that the young minister is trained in theology during his seminary days but upon accepting his first call into the parish he finds that much of his time is spent in the pastoral functions which seem to be somewhat different in nature. Whereas his training was quite theoretical, his vocation becomes much more practically oriented.

My first contact with this problem was in my parish service this past summer. As a summer minister I was immediately confronted with what seemed to be a discontinuity between my theological training and the practice of the parish. Almost all of my time with the young people was spent at the bowling alley, on the beach, roller skating, playing miniature golf, or camping. Very little time was spent in Bible study, prayer, and discussion of the Christian faith. These things, when done, tended to be tacked on to the entertainment. This same problem became apparent in the work with the adults. Whereas in seminary we study the theology of prayer, in the hospital room I found that prayer seldom met the theological standards that I had set up, but instead appeared to be a type of psychological therapy for individuals who had very little sense of its broader meaning in terms of contact with God. They expected me to pray, but accepted the prayer more as a token present to them, a type of bundle of pretty flowers to encourage them while in the hospital, instead of as a petition to God on their behalf. So much of my time was spent as a moderately well paid social worker running from one case to another, talking with

the people about their interests and problems, planning an active program, but so little time was being spent in the function of teaching elder, of involving the people in what I considered to be the Gospel.

This same pattern seemed to emerge in every area of the pastoral situation from the counseling session to the pulpit and I became increasingly concerned about my own tendency to move pastorally at what I thought was a much more superficial level than I had idealized. Whereas I had idealized proclaiming a Gospel of Jesus Christ which would change lives, so often this Gospel was greeted with a reassuring "that was a wonderful sermon" but any conversionary impact was not noticeable and throughout the week I once again became a functionary serving the immediate problems facing my parishioners. I was caught between my ideal on the one hand and the reality of the situation on the other.

This is the background of the problem which faced me as I returned to Seminary for my final year. However, I have come to see that there is a possibility that my frustration from this apparent tension between theology and the pastoral situation can be partially due to inadequacies in my own thinking which have created a greater problem than actually exists.

First, this problem may have been created as the result of bad theological thinking on my part. It is quite possible that my concept of the nature of theology as propositional truth revealed through Scripture was somewhat incomplete. I may have missed the dimension of the dynamic nature of theology which moves on beyond the theoretical and into the

practical. I may have been suffering from a faulty definition of theology erroneously using interchangeably the terms theological and theoretical in a manner which confined theology to an academic and non-practical function. The task of the minister, as I now see it, is to move past the theory of the classroom into everyday life, not carrying the classroom with him but using the academic aspect of theology as a whetstone against which rub the practical and many times common aspects of pastoral care.

Second, this problem may also have been the result of an inadequate concept of the role of the pastoral ministry. Possibly I was too quick to rule out as meaningless many of the routine daily functions of administration, transporting people, working on church improvement projects, and that I was too demanding in my efforts to lift prayer, Bible study, and preaching to artificial heights which met my own stereotype of spirituality. Possibly I was being governed by a set of self-imposed clichés which forced me to make an artificial dichotomy between the theological and the practical.

In trying to work out a solution to this dichotomy, I began reading in the area of pastoral care. In the course of this reading, I came across an issue of **Pastoral Psychology** which contains articles written in the area of the Church's ministry with youth, but which, I believe, shed light on this whole question of the relationship of theology to pastoral care.

First, I have come to see that part of the problem grows out of what can be called "traditional theologizing." Elmer Witt points out the tendency which the ministry has of giving trivial and unsatisfying answers to the serious questions of youth. So often we have endeavored to answer their questions on subjects that we have failed to take the trouble to master ourselves. Sex is one area in which we have not dealt adequately with the concerns of youth and confidence is lost in what we have to say in other areas as the result of our superficial answers to their questions in this area.¹

Evelyn Duvall develops the further theme that often we are afraid of not having the right answers for teen-agers involved in the deep questions of youth. However, these questions are not new but are the stuff of which the religious quest has always dealt. She says:

The good leader is not one who knows all the answers, or has to speak out on any questions his or her youth are raising. The religious leader who serves best is one who can take modern people as they are, has respect for their candor in discussing real questions, and demonstrates faith in the growth process within each of them as well as within the group.²

James Franklin Armstrong emphasizes that the approach in the theological classroom is of a different nature than the approach in the pastorate. He says:

It must be granted, I believe, that the minister does not study biblical, historical and theological subjects primarily to become the vendor of same. The physician's goal is not to teach his patients medicine; the lawyer's task is not to instruct his clients in the art of jurisprudence; neither is the pastor called to be a retailer of the Church's traditions.³

A second insight is the dimension of identification and image. Kilmer C. Myers alerts us to the fact that the priest in ministering to people must identify with them. This identification must be understood to be a process and never a realized state. He must be both sensitive and holy. This identification cannot be sloppy or he will destroy the image of trust placed in him as one who has confidence in the integrity of his parishioners' worth as human beings.⁴ William Hulme shows the problem of the minister developing too much of an authority-image with his people so that they tend to want to stay away from him and when they do come to him they do not open up entirely. They are threatened by his apparent certainty on all matters.⁵

Third, the attitude toward Christianity communicated by the minister is import-

ant in dealing with this problem of the relevance of theology to pastoral work, for the people of the congregation are quick to sense these subtle feelings. Joseph Havens states that the minister has the responsibility of communicating a dynamic Christianity, a sense of the "journeying-progressive nature of religious faith." He feels that too often the minister tends to treat lightly the various religious experiences of his parishioners, and endeavors to make them conform to more traditional historical religious experiences, not realizing that these which are more abnormal may be stepping stones in the process of maturing faith. Examples of these more abnormal experiences may be the mystical experiences with nature or literature which give an individual a deep personal and spiritual insight but which are apparently void of Christological implications. Instead of discounting this type of natural revelation the minister should be understanding and encourage this as a forward step to greater spiritual maturity.⁶

Fourth, one of the deepest insights I received into this problem of relevance between theology and the pastoral situation was the concept of "felt need" expressed by Marton Strommen. Strommen mentions the tension in the church between the people who favor the straight preaching of the word and those who are more involved in psychology and dealing with the felt need of individuals. He stresses that these two must not be kept separate and that both approaches must

work hand in hand. Here is kind of a key to the entire problem. The emphasis on the felt needs, the psychological needs, is questionable when it detracts from the basic content of the Christian faith but it is important in the issue of how to relate that faith. As Strommen says:

Felt needs should not determine the CONTENT of a ministry but rather the CONTEXT. They perform an important function by defining the arena where the gospel best can be shown as relevant. They identify the stage of development where the youth can be found. They show the points of contact where the gospel ministry can be seen as vital and urgent. Without this close identification with life, the treasured truths of Scripture tend to remain abstractions. And this is the dry rot that faces us in today's youth ministries.⁷

There is still a good deal of unfinished business which faces us in this area. We must continue to grapple with this problem in an endeavor not to fall into the weakness of functioning purely as a servant of the immediate needs of our people in disregard of theology on the one hand, or, of spending full time committing ourselves to functioning purely as a self-styled servant of God, theologizing in total or semi-unawareness of the immediate needs of our people. We must be "listening" servants, listening to the Word of God and to the needs of our parishioners.

¹Elmer N. Witt, "Youth in the Flesh"—(They Come No Other Way!) *Pastoral Psychology*, October, 1964, vol. 15, pp. 23-30.

²Evlyn Millis Duvall, "Peer Pressures on Youth," *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³James Franklin Armstrong, "The Training of the Minister: What is Essential," *Viewpoint*, (A contribution to a symposium by students and faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary), December 1964, p. 3.

⁴Kilmer C. Meyers, "Pastoral Counseling with Youth," *Pastoral Psychology*, October, 1964, vol. 15, pp. 21-22.

⁵William E. Hulme, "Pastoral Counseling with Youth," *Ibid.*, pp. 42-48.

⁶Joseph Havens, "College Religion as Personal Experience and as Pilgrimage," *Ibid.*, pp. 31-41.

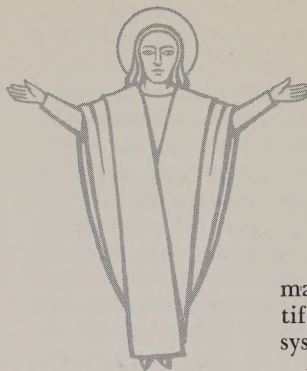
⁷Merton Strommen "Research into Youth and the Congregation," *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the dimension of Biblical Theology

Kenneth A. Macleod, Jr.

Can the church of today proclaim with confidence its faith in the resurrection of our Lord? Can we honestly profess to believe in this incredible "fact" of history? Every thinking Christian must face this problem sooner or later. This paper is largely a critique of R.R. Niebuhr's book *Resurrection and Historical Reason*, in which this problem is explored.

R. R. Niebuhr wishes to free theological thought from what he considers to be a dangerous reductionism in its consideration of the resurrection tradition.¹ As recent Biblical scholarship has pointed out the crucifixion-resurrection proclamation is determinative of the faith of the Apostolic church. Moreover, it is the resurrection, itself, which confirms the Lordship of Christ over the world and the demonic powers. Most Biblical scholars posit a givenness to the crucifixion tradition. However, under the weight of modern scientific theory, it is felt that the resurrection accounts cannot have the same givenness as historical fact. Hence, there have been many attempts to assimilate the resurrection to a general, abstract theory. For instance, the resurrection is postulated as a collective "experience" of the early church, or an existential, subjective "awareness", or as a metaphysical principle of interpretation. This kind of reductionism, according to Niebuhr, has the effect of cutting the central nerve of the Christian faith. In reply to reductionist tendencies on the part of modern scholars, Niebuhr argues that we must discover "an independent historical reason" in which the resurrection appearances are interpreted on their own terms and not through the presuppositions of a ready



the Resurrection

made *à priori* scientific or philosophical system.²

Niebuhr seems to be advocating a return to a more Aristotelian view of reason, as opposed to Platonic or Kantian reason. He agrees with Aristotle's common sense dictum that all knowledge starts from sense experience, in the subject-object relationship.³ However, knowledge is not merely knowledge of "brute facts". A fact can be described as an "event" when it is interpreted and appropriated by a knowing subject or community.⁴ An historical event is, therefore, both external fact and subjective interpretation. Therefore, subject and object are never independent of each other, but rather can exist only in interdependence.

Since knowledge begins in, and is dependent upon, sense experience, Niebuhr is against any *à priori* separation of the knowing subject from the realm of nature and history, i.e. the realm of the contingent.⁵ He is against the epistemological splits between the realm of Being and becoming, so characteristic of Platonic and Kantian epistemologies. In these epistemologies, nature and history are the realm of "becoming" and cannot give "absolute" truth. Niebuhr feels that this view is completely incompatible with the conviction that Christianity is an "historical" religion in the literal sense (i.e. participating in nature and history, "The Word became flesh").⁶

In keeping with this Aristotelian "realistic" perspective, Niebuhr asserts the necessity of an "objective" or given ele-

ment in the resurrection narratives. This "givenness" is interdependent with the interpretation of that fact, but is not reducible to that interpretation.⁷

St. Augustine writes that when God created the world he also created time. This would imply the interdependence of history and nature. Indeed, this is commonsensically true, that an event in history is also a natural event, because that which occurs in time (history) also occurs in space (the realm of nature). For this reason, I feel that when Niebuhr calls the resurrection a genuinely historical event, he must also call it a natural event. But when it is described as a natural event, it must be open to the investigation of physical science, as the discipline which deals with natural events *quâ* natural events. I feel that any theologian who claims a givenness to the historical event, must also defend it as a given natural event, offensive as this may be to modern science. Of course, this event is not just a "brute fact," when conceived in this way. The factual givenness would be interpreted in the believing and remembering community. But an interpreted fact must also be empirically verifiable as a fact, and it is precisely here that the modern mind cannot accept the resurrection as a true fact of nature and history.

I also do not share Niebuhr's confidence in discovering "an independent historical method", in which the resurrection is interpreted on its own terms. Because of the common sense interrelation of nature and history, I do not feel that there can be an independent historical method. To counteract the effects of scientific reductionism with an independent historical method, would merely replace scientific positivism with an historical positivism. Niebuhr attacks the use of scientific *à priori* principles which dehistoricize the resurrection event, but an independent historical reason would merely "denaturalize" the resurrection event. Once the resurrection has been posited as genuinely historical, it cannot be saved from the clutches of reductionist science, although on logical grounds no scientific method

could ever "prove" that the resurrection did not occur as a natural-historical event.

I feel that Niebuhr is still swayed by the very idealism he wishes to counteract. He says that in isolation the resurrection is questionable, but that in its relation to the rest of history, as it molds and interprets history, it is most concrete.⁸ Perhaps this is an effect of what I call "historical positivism". His historical method seems to be casting judgment on the credibility of a fact of nature, although at one point he criticises Brunner for doing the same thing by theological method.⁹ It is my contention that the resurrection will remain an incredible event *quâ* natural event, to any man who shares the modern scientific world view, despite the effect this purported resurrection has "exerted" upon history. Neither theological nor historical methods, in themselves, can make "a fact" more credible or concrete.

I feel that Niebuhr also disregards some historical arguments against the fact of the resurrection. Other eastern religions have proclaimed saviour gods who have overcome death and the demonic powers and have had startling "effects" on adherents, yet it is felt that there is no "historical" or "natural" basis for these myths. There is no need to posit natural-historical factuality for these myths, although we still see "effects" approximating the Christian experience of release from the bondage of sin and death.

I agree with Niebuhr that the Christian should not separate nature, history, and the knowing subject; and it would be tempting to posit the resurrection as a place where these three elements converge, the faith of a knowing subject in a natural-historical "given" event. But arguing from a religious necessity to an historical-natural fact is ultimately dishonest, unless we are willing to defend the resurrection as natural fact to the modern scientific mind, something even Niebuhr is unwilling to do.

Niebuhr defends the fact that history escapes the grasp of positivistic science. And yet history, like nature, is only one "aspect" of the total "mystery of Being",

which in all its manifestations transcends the knowing mind. By this, I mean that the mind necessarily thinks in abstractions, which can never be equated with the external realities which the mind purports to "know". But man *apprehends* in his experience, more than he *comprehends* abstractly in his mind. Perhaps that is why medieval philosophy maintains that Being cannot be "known", i.e. abstractly and exhaustively. It can only be contemplated and loved. Being resists the quantification and analysis of the positivistic intellect. The analytic, detached "knowledge" of positivism kills what it knows by the process of abstraction. Science kills the reality which it "knows" by reducing that reality to signs and symbols. Theology kills God, by making him into "*the* Abstraction" by means of an absurdly analytic method borrowed from science.

Being frustrates the attempts of men to reduce it to abstract general theories. The very fact of historical and natural contingency demonstrates this, as Niebuhr points out. Being is not a postulate of the human mind, any more than a contingent event, which always has an element of surprise, is a postulate of the human mind. Theories about Being have a way of degenerating into a dead fatalism, in which all wonder, all surprise, and all mystery are removed from the world, in the name of the abstract system.

Death also has a diabolical way of breeding abstractions of the mind. When I think of a friend who has passed away, long years ago, all I have in my mind is an image, an abstraction of that person, which is as dead as the corpse itself. I may even "idealize" that person, and remake him into a person who never was. Or worse yet, that person may drift away from me, unremembered.

But the resurrection faith resists the reductionism and abstractionism which is inherent in death because this faith says very boldly that Jesus' reality, his Life, was not destroyed by death. His life and power were *in fact* communicated to the apostles and the Church in subsequent

generations. The dubious historical-natural "fact", as recorded in the gospels is not necessary to the resurrection faith, but the necessary fact is that the Jesus who "appears" to the apostles and vivifies the Church is not an abstract image of the mind (whether subjective or collective) but an experienced reality testifying to the fact that death did not effectively destroy Jesus. Thus, the resurrection faith maintains that there is a qualitative difference between my "abstract" remembrance of my dead friend, and my "living" remembrance of Jesus, as experienced within the Church, in which there is real communion not just detached reflection.

There are many things which force a person to see the world abstractly, and cast a pall of death over life. One of these is the abstraction of the intellect, which barter living realities for dead concepts. Man can also objectify himself in the experience of guilt. He regards himself as an object, and commits a kind of suicide in this reflective process. But the contemplation of death and the fear of it, forces a man to objectify himself even more radically. In that fear, man sees himself as "a thing" called "body". Those who live in this fear are already dead, in a sense. But the Christian faith resists this "objectification" of death. It opposes the reduction of Being to abstract concepts. It opposes the objectification of man caused by his guilty conscience. And finally, by faith in the resurrection, it asserts that not even death can "objectify" man, can annihilate him, for Jesus was not destroyed by death.

But is this resurrected Lord, verifiable by scientific, historical, or theological positivism? Could we take a picture of the resurrected Christ, something which anyone would have to assert if he believed in true historicity? Or does the resurrection, like all things known and experienced through love and faith, participate in that transcendence of Being, which can not be "known" by the worldly wisdom of detached knowledge. Those who, by faith, confess that Jesus is Lord see in him the

Life Giver. He is the one sent from God who overcomes the "wisdom of this world" which attempts to remake the world according to the abstractions of the intellect. He is the one who overcomes the

self conscious death created by guilt. And finally, he is the one who overcomes the abstraction caused by the fear of death, by "appearing" to his own, not as a dead fact of history, but as a Life Giving Spirit.

¹ R. R. Niebuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason*, (New York: 1957) p. 135.

² p. 71

³ p. 114

⁴ p. 93-4; 106

⁵ p. 75-6

⁶ p. 76; 108

⁷ p. 155; 174-5

⁸ p. 104

⁹ p. 26



Commentary

Dr. Daniel L. Migliore
Instructor in Biblical Studies
Princeton Theological Seminary

Kenneth Macleod's interesting review of *Resurrection and Historical Reason* by R. R. Niebuhr sharply takes issue with the thesis of the book. In opposition to the flights from the resurrection as an historical event in both existentialism and *Heilsgeschichte*, Niebuhr argues that history is its own interpreter, that the resurrection epitomizes the particularity, novelty, and irrationality of all historical events, and that the resurrection provides the church with the only sufficient analogy by which it can understand the peculiar features of its historical existence. While acknowledging the centrality of the reality of the resurrection for Christian faith, apostolic and contemporary, the reviewer sees Niebuhr's effort to provide a critique of historical reason which would minimize the conflict between faith in the risen Lord and the modern canons of historical criticism as a *cul de sac*. Macleod is unhappy with Niebuhr's argument basically for two reasons. First, it is a matter of common sense that every historical event is also (though not only) a natural event. However, despite Niebuhr's insistence that the resurrection can properly be called an historical event, even he is unwilling "to defend the resurrection as natural fact to the modern scientific mind." Second, despite Niebuhr's rejection of positivism, it appears that he is himself still within the clutches of the positivistic mentality in so far as he thinks it possible to gain a right understanding of the resurrection through detached and abstract reflection rather than by participation in its reality.

With regard to the first objection it must be pointed out that Macleod has unfortunately overlooked a most important distinction which Niebuhr makes between Nature and nature. While Nature for Niebuhr designates the system of law which we employ to grasp the events of our environment, nature is used by him to refer to the particular mode of activity characteristic of each existent. This distinction allows Niebuhr to say that while every historical event has a nature and therefore is part of Nature, it does not follow that

Nature necessarily comprehends all aspects of the nature of a particular event. It may be wondered whether this double spelling of nature is the least confusing method of making a distinction. In any case, Niebuhr introduces the distinction because he *does* want to call the resurrection a natural event in some sense. It is also for this reason that he takes pains to show that the notion of nature is not self-evident or constant in meaning but itself has a history. For Niebuhr the resurrection is not a violation of nature; it violates only death and brings judgment on our uncritical confidence in the category of law.

Macleod's second objection is more diffuse than the first, though no less mistaken. To begin with, we shall have to take the reviewer's campaign to prohibit abstractions in theological discourse *cum grano salis* since he shows himself to be no total abstainer in this regard. (One would have to look hard for a word more abstract than "Being.") More to the point, however, is the fact that Niebuhr obviously has no intention of proving or verifying the resurrection for Christian faith. In his Preface he warns against construing the purpose of his book as apologetics. His problem is rather that of a man standing within a community which knows its life to be determined by the resurrection and struggling to win some clarity about the conditions of this awareness. This involves inquiring into the meaning of the resurrection as history. Macleod writes: "Necessary to the resurrection faith is not the dubious historical-natural 'fact,' as recorded in the gospels, but the fact that the Jesus who 'appears' to the apostles and vivifies the church is not an abstract image of the mind . . . but an experienced reality." With some terminological reservations we may agree with this statement. But what is the meaning of the 'appearing' of Jesus? In what sense does Jesus "become" an experienced reality for the apostles and for us? It is precisely the eventfulness of this appearing and this becoming which justifies Niebuhr's inquiry into the relation of the resurrection faith and historical reason.

This issue of DIMENSION, our student theological journal, reflects the multiplicity of concern, perspective and methodology in dealing with the theological problems and questions which arise during a theological education. We have felt that it is important that this campus publication be subject to no single "party-line," nor should it represent one particular type of theological concern. For this reason we have attempted to include articles which reflect the diversity of thought and approach which can be found on our campus.

The articles themselves are written in the light of a variety of concerns. Hence, you will find one article which is concerned with a typically philosophical question—the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God. Another is concerned with the dimension of pastoral psychology and speaks to the important question of the limits of honesty in our personal relationships, both in terms of our role as pastors and as individuals. A third probes the dimension of biblical theology and deals with some important questions concerning the resurrection of Christ. The fourth article deals with the relationship of our "academic" theology to the important area of pastoral care. Each of these dimensions is an important aspect of a well rounded theological education and demands our concern and attention. Each has been written in the light of a particular theological perspective and is thus open to comment and criticism not only in terms of its content but in terms of its theological and methodological presuppositions. In an attempt to stimulate discussion and focus our evaluation of these articles, we have asked for commentaries on two of the articles by persons well acquainted with the issues discussed. These commentaries are included in the text of the journal. We do, however, invite response to the articles (and the commentaries) by members of the entire Princeton community through the pages of VIEWPOINT.

DIMENSION was conceived in order to give creative expression to the theological thought going on in our community. All those wishing to submit articles to be considered for the May issue of DIMENSION must submit their articles to the Editor by April 9, 1965. Special consideration will be given to those articles which contain originality of thought or approach.

The Editors wish to express their gratitude to the writers and the commentators who contributed to the March issue. Also we would like to thank Mr. Leslie Broomfield, our consulting editor from the Princeton Printing Company, for his invaluable aid in making the mechanics of publishing this journal as pleasant as possible.

Clayton Carlson

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